



Date of Council Meeting: June 24 2013

**TOWN OF LEESBURG
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

Subject: Informational Memo:
Endowment for the Thomas Balch Library

Staff Contact: Jeanette A. Irby, Town Attorney
Alexandra S. Gressitt, Thomas Balch Library Director

Recommendation: To authorize the amendment to the Town Code for the endowment for the Thomas Balch Library (hereinafter TBL) in a structure approved by Council to use the funds that have been donated and collected for the benefit of the TBL.

Fiscal Analysis: Included.

Current Status: The general assembly approved legislation at the request of the Town giving the Town the authority to set up an endowment. Council would retain some control with respect to the funds that have been gifted to the Town for the support of the TBL via participation on the endowment board or committee set up for that purpose. The “Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Inc.” (a separate 501 (C) (3)), who support the library with fund-raising, collection and program planning) and the “Thomas Balch Library Commission” have been briefed on the status of the endowment and requested to provide input as to the proposed structure.

One idea which has been suggested is that the endowment board would be comprised of 5 members with varying and staggered terms of service. One member would be appointed by Council, one member would be selected by the Commission and a current commissioner, one member would be selected by the Friends and a current member and there would be one “at large” member who would have demonstrated an interest and expertise in the subject matter of the TBL.

The stake holders have indicated that they would provide input by the end of August 2013.

The endowment would be responsible to formally establish and administer the endowment and other funds as they become available that have restrictions for their use. Staff would like to receive input from the Town Council as to the proposed structure of the endowment.

Once Council and the stakeholders have agreed upon the structure of the endowment an initiation to the Town Code will be requested so that the endowment can be formally be codified.

Financial Information: The endowment would be funded with monies that have been collected and restricted for the benefit the TBL. Gifts to the TBL have been donated with restrictions, including the original trust. Beginning in 2008 the Friends, comprised of volunteers from throughout Loudoun County, have sponsored a highly successfully and well received fundraising

event for TBL. Some of the funds raised have been earmarked for an endowment for the library. Visit their website at www.balchfriends.org.

The proposed endowment would accept the funds from the Friends which are presently holding in excess of \$45,000 from five fundraisers (2008-12) specifically earmarked for the endowment with the possibility of additional funding of \$60,000 for a total of \$105,000. The Town has received from donations in the amount of \$628,247 that are restricted for the benefit of the TBL. Additionally, the Town has \$101,228 in funds from the original Thomas Balch Trust. This trust transfers to the Town approximately \$4,000 annually in investment earnings.

Historical Background: TBL is a history and genealogy library owned and operated by the Town of Leesburg. Collections focus on Loudoun County, regional and Virginia history, genealogy, military history with special emphasis on the American Civil War, and ethnic history. It is designated as an Underground Railroad research site.

The library was established and dedicated May 13, 1922 as a memorial tribute to Thomas Balch (1821-1877), a native of Leesburg. Initially, the library operated with money from an endowment established by Thomas Willing Balch and Edwin Swift Balch, sons of Thomas Balch. In the late 1960's it became a branch of the Loudoun County Public Library system serving the community as a full service public library.

In 1994 the county transferred ownership of the library to the Town of Leesburg to be operated as a history and genealogy library. The original building was designed by noted Washington DC architect Waddy B. Wood. In 2000 renovations and a sympathetic two floor addition, designed by Bowie Gridley doubled the library's size. Interior enhancements include murals depicting local history, portraits of distinguished local figures and Thomas Moser furniture. Should the Town not maintain the library the building becomes the property of the Town, but the collection at the time of the conveyance returns to the county.

One of the library's missions is collecting and preserving printed, manuscript, photographic, cartographic and genealogical documentation of Leesburg, Loudoun County and the surrounding region. The library actively seeks and welcomes donations of original business records, diaries, correspondence and photographs (with identification) documenting the life, culture and history of Leesburg and Loudoun County.

At the present time the Library collections include over sixty-two thousand books and periodicals, maps, visual collections, newspapers, and manuscripts. The library offers lectures on history and genealogy, classes, and exhibits. Group tours and orientations are available on request and books about local history are available for purchase on-site.